

Package Benefits Arizona Families, Vets, Seniors, Small Businesses

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep Harry Mitchell today voted in favor of health care reform that will benefit Arizona families, veterans, seniors and small businesses.

"After a year of debate, studying bills, and listening to Arizonans, one thing has been made clear. We cannot sustain the path we are on because health care costs are burdening Arizona families, hurting the economy and slowing the recovery," Mitchell said. "This package would strengthen Medicare for seniors, maintain TRICARE for veterans, help mitigate the impact of Medicaid costs on Arizona, and make health insurance more accessible and affordable for individuals, families and small businesses. Additionally, it would rein in costs and reduce the deficit."

The House of Representatives passed the Senate version of the health care bill along with a reconciliation bill that includes critical fixes to concerns Mitchell had with the Senate version of the bill. Knowing the fixes would address issues such as an inequitable Medicaid funding formula for Arizona, Mitchell supported both measures. The Senate must now approve the fixes to ensure that they take effect.

Health care reform will benefit Arizonans in many ways including reducing Arizona's Medicaid costs and maintaining TRICARE for members of the military, veteran and their families.

Additionally, the health care reform measures adopted by the House today would:

- Prohibit insurance companies from denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions and prevent them from dropping your coverage if you get sick
- It will not eliminate private insurance or kick anyone off of their current insurance.

- Set up a free market health insurance exchange for more competition and allows private insurance purchases across state lines

- It **will not** dismantle the private insurance industry.

- Strengthen Medicare for 84,000 residents in Mitchell's district, closes the prescription drug donut hole for seniors and provide coverage for preventative care. It has been endorsed by AARP
 - As a Medicare recipient himself, Mitchell would not support a plan that harmed Medicare.

- Help small businesses with tax credits to help cover costs of providing insurance so they can retain talent and continue to be competitive. It also allows small businesses to band together and 'pool' their purchasing power to negotiate better insurance rates
 - It will not unduly burden small businesses.

- Preserve TRICARE coverage for our nation's veterans and military families
 - It will not force military families and veterans to acquire additional coverage.

- Reduce Arizona's Medicaid costs by treating Arizona equitably by providing assistance in covering individuals enrolled in AHCCCS. It also removes special deals like the so-called 'Cornhusker Kickback' that treated states unfairly.
 - It will not have devastating effects on Arizona's economy and state budget which were in dire shape before this legislation and would be without it.

- According to the Congressional Budget Office, which both Republicans and Democrats rely on as the non-partisan budget referee, it will reduce the deficit by \$138 billion in the first 10 years and \$1.2 trillion in the following 10 years because its provisions work to bend health care costs over time.
 - It will not add to the nation's deficit.

- Make health insurance more accessible and affordable for individuals and small businesses
- It **does** not allow federal dollars to fund abortion or provide coverage for illegal immigrants.

Some key provisions that take effect immediately include:

- Ban insurance companies from dropping people from their coverage when they get sick.
- Ban insurance companies from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions
- Create an interim high-risk pool to provide immediate access to people who lack coverage due to pre-existing conditions.
- Allow young people to stay on their parents' insurance policy until they are 26 years old.
- Provide a \$250 rebate to Medicare beneficiaries who hit the donut hole in 2010.
- Provide tax credits for small businesses that will help make current coverage more affordable.
- Create a temporary program that helps employers offset costs for providing coverage for retirees age 55-64.
- Invest in training programs to increase the number of primary care doctors, nurses and public health professionals.